

Overview of Comments from Residents of Trails Edge Lane

Reston Association Covenants Committee Hearing
October 20, 2016

Trails Edge Lane is a cul-de-sac with 17 houses, located on a tree-lined street in Reston, VA. The homes are all single-family residences with 4-5 bedrooms. Our street is the quintessential family neighborhood, with children regularly biking in the street and frequent social events with the neighbors.

Earlier this year, one home on our block was purchased and the owner immediately began offering individual rooms for nightly rentals on AirBnB. He rents as many as four rooms at a time for as low as \$35/night. To the best that we can tell, dozens of individuals have stayed in the home in the last 9 months, as evidenced by the number of reviews posted on-line (currently 35) and the number of cars present in the driveway and on the street (typically 2-4 additional vehicles).

The neighboring residents of Trails Edge Lane ask that the Reston Association Board review the RA covenants and take action to prohibit this type of hotel-like activity. We believe that the short-term transient nature of this business in a residential area decreases safety, violates the spirit, if not the letter, of the Association's bylaws, and is counter to the spirit of community Reston was founded on.

The transient nature of this business is inconsistent with the spirit and core values of Reston as a planned community.

- Our neighborhood, like many in Reston, is a community that we have worked hard to build and maintain. Our children attend the local schools, play on the local sports teams, and perform in the local theater. Our parents volunteer as coaches, on the PTA, as refs, and youth group leaders. When there is a snow storm, we help each other shovel out. We rely on our "village" to help keep our children safe. We know all our neighbors so that they can be our eyes and ears.
- Now, rather than a family that contributes to our community, we have a business that invites transient individuals to our neighborhood. The homeowner advertises the wonderful aspects of our community as features of the rental property, and yet he has done nothing to build this community and does nothing to sustain it. This business profits off of our investments and our shared covenant, while eroding the very fabric of our community.
- As residents, we all agree to follow the bylaws that are intended to nurture the spirit of Reston. But allowing homeowners to open what amounts to a hotel on a residential street flies in the face of that spirit.

This business model takes advantage of RA investments intended to benefit the community and can have potentially adverse impacts on property values.

- Residents in Reston pay association dues that support a number of community resources, including the pools, paths, parks, tennis courts, etc. The business owner has advertised access to these resources as a perk of staying at his house. Certainly these shared assets were not intended to be used by dozens (or more!) of people per household over the course of a year.

- Per RA documents, if a Member wants to change the color of their house or cut down a tree or put up a fence he must obtain the written concurrence of three adjacent homeowners then obtain approval from the RA. Yet Members have no say when a neighbor wants to establish a commercial enterprise in their residential neighborhood. This is an inconsistent application of Use and Maintenance of Property covenants.
- As the community's steward, the RA is responsible for maintaining a quality of life in Reston and for preserving property values through a system of covenants and restrictions that govern the maintenance and use of property. The operation of a business in a residential neighborhood is inconsistent with those goals, values and responsibilities.

This business has increased the number of cars driving and parked on our quiet street, leading to increased safety risks.

- The additional traffic puts our kids at risk. Families move to cul-de-sacs so that their children can ride their bikes in the street at a relatively lower risk. People who live on the street and their visitors are well aware of the large number of children who live here—ranging in age from a few months through to high schoolers—and drive accordingly. The significant increase in traffic by drivers unfamiliar with the neighborhood means a significant increase in risk to our children.
- The fact that the transient residents do not have ties to the neighborhood, means that it can be much harder to hold them accountable. If someone does something—crashes into one of our cars or damages our property—and then departs, how will we ensure that there is appropriate recourse?

This business brings more people without ties to the neighborhood, increasing the risk of bad actors, but it lacks basic hospitality industry measures to ensure safety and accountability.

- With no vested interest in the neighborhood, transients represent a potential safety threat to Members and their families, as well as to their property.
- This business has caused a significant increase in the number of unknown persons on the street, which means an increased risk of malfeasance with a decreased level of accountability. We have already had one safety issue, and feel that it is just a matter of time until another arises.
- This business model relies upon the good will of the business owner to ensure safety. Unfortunately, when a safety issue arose with a resident at his property, there was little cooperation from the business owner.
- The homeowner is advertising the family friendly nature of the neighborhood and making it clear to potential customers that there are children here. In other words, he is using our community to advertise his business and making it attractive to sexual predators.